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ABSTRACT

The protection of the blind from the early 17th to the late 19th century, and the emergence of private and later public schools for the blind and deaf are discussed in a review of special education in Japan. Although the education of the visually and aurally handicapped was made mandatory, educational facilities are noted to be too scarce for the compulsory schooling of other handicapped children. Laws encouraging school enrollment and the financial responsibility of government are described. Priorities established by the Ministry of Education are listed, and the present status and problems of special education are explored. (RJ)

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CURRENT STATUS AND PROBLEMS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION IN JAPAN

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Participants are kindly requested to refer to the separate "Special Education in Japan" and the tables and materials annexed thereto.

Introduction

It is my deepest pleasure and privilege to have the opportunity to address to this conference on the status of special education in Japan and some of the problems it faces. I am particularly grateful for the kind invitation extended both to myself and Prof. Yasuo Tsujimura of Ochanomizu University to participate in this most significant conference, for I firmly believe that this gathering not only provides for a most useful exchange of opinion and information but also contributes greatly to the future progress of special education in Japan. Let me, therefore, express my feeling of deep indebtedness to the Council for Exceptional Children for organizing the Pan-Pacific Conference, as well as to the United States Office of Education for its invaluable support.

In the time given to me, I shall describe as objectively as possible how the special education had developed in Japan, what are its recent developments, what kind of problems it now faces, and what sort of improvements are considered necessary. In so doing, I am expecting valuable advices from our respected Chairman, Dr. James W. Moss, and useful suggestions from my colleagues from Korea and Taiwan.

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Apart from this presentation, I have also submitted to the conference a brief document entitled "Special Education in Japan," which contains relevant tables and materials. I hope you will kindly refer to it in your leisure time.

Historical Review of Special Education in Japan

During the feudal period under the Tokugawa regime (from early 17th century to the late 19th century), ordinary people were given education in Terakoya-private schools, namely schools run by temples throughout the country where children learned basic reading, writing and mathematics. However, there were no formal opportunities for the handicapped children and adults for education and welfare, except for the blind. The blind were given special protection by the Tokugawa regime. They were given vocational training in massage and music, and were protected under a kind of welfare program.

As Japan emerged to be a modern nation toward the end of 19th century, the top priority of the government was in education. By the Government Order of Education promulgated in 1872, the nation's first system of public educational establishments were established. It was a few years after this promulgation that the first Blind and Deaf School was set up in Kyoto. This school, however, was not established as part of public school system of the nation but was an independent effort on the part of municipal authority of Kyoto City. After Kyoto school, many blind and deaf schools were established in various parts of the country through self-sacrificing effort of charity organizations and volunteers. They were all private schools. However, by 1930's these schools were faced with serious financial difficulties, and most of them

had to be transferred to the hand of public authorities.

It was in 1926 that blind schools and deaf schools were legally incorporated into the system of public educational establishment. By 1948, there was at least one blind and/or deaf school in every one of the 46 prefectures of Japan so that it was decided to make education of such handicapped compulsory.

On the other hand, problems of the mentally retarded, crippled and other handicapped had been, till about 1930, considered not so much as those of education as the problems of hospital care and home welfare. It was in 1930's that a small beginning was made to provide educational opportunities to these kinds of handicapped. However, education of these handicapped, namely those other than blind and deaf, was not made compulsory primarily due to the fact that the educational facilities for them were too scarce to make a compulsory education practical. The situation is basically the same today.

It is to be noted, in this connection, that in 1957 a special law was enacted to the effect that, with regard to the mentally retarded, crippled, sick and weaken, where these children are enrolled in special schools, their education should be treated in the same manner as the compulsory education so that the government assumes budgetary responsibility for the payroll of teachers, teaching materials and other expenses.

Already in 1954, a law was enacted to encourage the school enrollment of handicapped children, and this was indeed a great breakthrough in the development of special education in Japan. Under this law, the government covers whole or half of the following expenses, depending on the financial capability of families: the expenses covered include traffic fares to and from school both for the child and attending parent, provision of school lunch, dormitory expenditures (food, bed, daily

necessaries, etc.), other school expenses such as for school excursion, textbooks and other supplies. As mentioned above, this law proved to be an important impetus for the development of special education in Japan.

In the years following 1955, the following three objectives were given priorities in the national policy.

1) To establish, as soon as possible, at least one school for the crippled in each of the prefectures;
2) To set up special classes for the mentally retarded in both primary and junior high schools. Here, the emphasis is placed on setting up of such special classes rather than of special schools;
3) To establish department in universities for training of teachers of special schools.

As the result of these priority policies, special school for the crippled has been established in each one of the prefectures by 1970. However, educational facilities for the sick and weaken and for the mentally retarded are still insufficient. Although special schools for the handicapped of these kinds (namely, sick & weaken, mentally retarded) have been set up in more than half of the prefectures, it will be several years before they extend to all the prefectures of the country. Therefore, in the course of several years, the law will be enacted to make compulsory the education of all the handicapped children.

With regard to Priority 2 above, namely setting up of special classes for the mentally retarded, the Ministry of Education established the standard of number of special classes on the basis of municipal population. According to this standard, one special class is

to be set up each for primary and junior high schools in a municipality with a population under 10,000, and two classes in a municipality with a population of under 30,000. Similary three classes are to be set up in a city of 50,000 population. For the municipalities with over 50,000 population, one class is to be added each for primary and junior high schools for an increase in population of 50,000, so that there are four classes in a municipality with population under 100,000, five classes for population under 150,000, and so on. Under this program, special classes have been added each year at the pace of 1,200. This is clearly shown in the graph attached to the separate document in which the curve makes a sharp upward turn in the year 1955.

The third priority was the training of special school teachers. Here the major emphasis was placed on training of teachers of mentally retarded children, with a program of establishing a department of the mentally retarded in each of the national universities of education located in all the prefectures. At present, the number of universities giving instruction and training to special school teachers in different field of handicap, as well as the number of student enrolled each year are as follows:

* For the training of teachers of deaf school, six universities, with 15 enrollment each.
* For the training of teachers of blind schools, two universities, with 15 enrollment each.
* For the training of teachers of mentally retarded schools, 44 universities, with enrollment of 20 students each.
* For the training of teachers ~~of teachers~~ for the crippled, two universities, with 20 enrollment each.

* For the training of speech-therapists, two universities, with 20 enrollment each.

Besides them, there are one year or half-year course for the retraining of teachers already in special schools or special classes. Five universities hold such courses for retaining of teachers for the mentally retarded, two universities for the crippled, and two universities for the speech-therapists. Other than these, there are special courses[9] for teachers who are blind to train them in rehabilitation techniques, such as physical therapy. These are two year courses.

In spite of all what I have just listed up, it must be mentioned that all these universities are suffering from the shortage of instructors, and the number and variety of other training institutions such as for the sick and weaken and host of other handicap are far from being satisfactory.

Present Status and Problems of Special Education in Japan

First of the problems relates to the postponement or exemption of obligation to receive education. Article 23 of School Education Law provides, and I quote:

> As for the protectors of those children who are to be sent to school according to the provisions of preceding Article (namely school age children), but who are recognized as being difficult to attend school owing to their invalidity, imperfect growth or other unavoidable circumstances, the board of education of the city, town or village may allow them to postpone the fullfilment of their obligation stipulated in paragraph I of the preceding Article or exempt them from that obligation, in accordance with the regulations established by the competent authorities, with the approval of the prefectural board of education. (unquote)

The problem is that it is not easy to have this particular provision executed properly. In certain cases, parents can obtain somewhat haphazard certificate from the doctor and make application to the board of education, so that they can easily postpne or exempt their obligation to send their children to school. This is the case of parents who do not wish to send their children to school who are not so handicapped as to make it impossible to do so. However, on the other hand, there are parents whose children are so severely handicapped as to be home bound, but who insist, on the strength of democratic principles, that these children should receive school education. When they are enrolled, the situation is rather unhapply both for the children and for the special school. However, the number of such parents is increasing.

In the separate document, I mentioned that both the kind and degree of handicap of exceptional children have been diversified increasingly in Japan. The second problem relates to this point. Article 71 and Article 75 define respectively the category of handicapped children to be enrolled in special schools and special classes. (School Education Law). But these definitions are both too broad and too limited. It is my opinion that in order to cope with this difficulty, local board of education should be given authority to make its own rules and regulations so as to enable it to flexibly meet the situation obtaining in its locality with regard to the education of handicapped children. It would also be necessary for the Ministry of Education to extend the category of exceptional children so that all the children suffering from various kinds of handicap may be fully protected. For example, the following categories may advisedly be established:

1. Mentally retarded
2. Visually handicapped

3. Auditorily handicapped
4. Communication handicapped
5. Neurologically or perceptually impaired
    (a) Neurologically impaired
    (b) Perceptually impaired
6. Orthopaedically handicapped
7. Chronically ill
8. Emotionally disturbed
9. Socially maladjusted
10. Multiply handicapped

It is one thing to suggest these categories, and it is quite another to examine and classify children in the field according to these categories. It is for this reason that the Ministry of Education is now working very hard at giving appropriate guidance to prefectural board of education concerning comprehensive physical examination, psychological examination, educational assessment and social case study. It is also our hope as well as policy to establish a special education center in each prefercture which will be in charge of diagnosis and educational placement of exceptional children. However, I must admit that it will be some years before this can be fully realized.

While our ideal objective is to place the classification of handicapped children under the joint responsiblity of members of the child study team of each local community, it is, as yet, extremely difficult in Japan to organize an effective child study team, or cooperation of various experts and specialists in the field.

In short, it is my conviction that in light of the increasing variety of handicap and impairment, we can no longer effectively use the old concept, but we must work hard at more flexible, yet more effective and clear classification of handicapped children.

The next problem is an expanded use of visiting teachers. Article 75 of the School Education Law provides, and I quote:

> The Schools mentioned in the preceding paragraph may give education to those children who are under medical care by providing special classes or by dispatching teachers. (unquote)

It is regretted that this particular provision is not always fully made use of. It is essential that each board of education, taking full advantage of this provision, should extend the educational activities through use of visiting teachers so that they can give home instruction or bedside instruction to those exceptional children who, for one reason or other, cannot attend special schools. Since this falls under the jurisdiction of local borad of education, the Ministry of Education can give only a very broad guidance. However, the need of instruction at home and at bedside is very badly felt. Where such instruction is available, it is also neccessary to improve its quality through use of various audio-visual aids, such as captioned film.

With regard to the length of school day and year, it is advised to be very flexible taking into account the kind and degree of handicap. For example, the School Education Law stipulates that the compulsory education starts at the age of 6 and ends at 15, but in case of exceptional children, education must start much earlier at the age of 3 and it must continue for longer period until the age of 20. However, such difference is not adequately taken care of in terms of legal provision. Personally I consider it necessary for the government to provide handicapped children with educational opportunity starting at the age of three at the latest and covering till the age of twenty in the least, for the handicapped in this age group need not only welfare but, more importantly, education.

I trust you can share my feeling that it is not always easy to revise a law and make improvement in the field of special education. To mark a legislative victory in this field is a rather rare phenomenon

However, it would be less difficult to attempt some modification in the executive order rather than in the laws themselves. Being in the Ministry of Education, I have attempted and shall continue to attempt such modification and improvement in the Order for the Enforcement of the School Education Law and the Ministry of Education Organization Order, as can be beneficial for the cause of exceptional children. It is particularly in this connection that I wish to have full exchange of information concerning rules and regulations in various countries of Pan-Pacific area in the field of special education. For, when I return home from this conference better educated and better informed, I shall be able to make that much more of contribution to an improved level and quality of special education in Japan.

Leaving the questions of rules and regulations with this note, let me go over to some other problems we face in Japan. The area which calls for the greatest improvement is that of school facilities and equipment, and that of manpower, namely number of teachers.

As far as ordinary schools are concerned, much improvement has been made in recent years in their facilities and equipment. But very little is done for the development of audio-visual aid geared for the purpose of special education. Particularly in need are such devices as language master and captioned film. I also regret that we do not have facilities similar to Special Education Material Center in the United States.
It is, therefore, very important for our country to encourage development of educational technology and engineering, especially for special education. I have given a brief description in the separate document concerning the newly established National Sepcial Education Research Institute, which will mark a very modest start in this field. Although, as presently contemplated, the institute has no department of educational engineering, it is my hope that such department would be added to it in the near future.

The next problem relates to the point I made earlier. It is that industrialization, urbanization, pollution, rapid movement of population are all giving rise to new kinds of handicap and impairment, some of which we had never heard of before. For instance, we have in Japan an increasing number of children suffering from asthmatic cough, cadiac, progressive muscular dystrophy, aphasia, dyslexia and different symptoms of maladjustment. Although not directly related to urban phenomena, there was a case of multiple ocurrence of deaf and hear-of-hearing in Okinawa caused by rubella. More than 500 children became victims. Cases of premature infants are also increasing. It is a sad but apparently almost certain prediction that these and other new types of exceptional children are going to increase.

Because this is a problem not limited to Japan but observable in all of the nations represented here in this conference, I suggest that some mechanism should be worked out in order to ensure effective and instataneous exchange of information concerning diagnosis, therapy and education of such new types of exceptional children. We should probably go much beyond exchange of information. It would be necessary to follow the record of these children, pool them in certain place and combat this problem through our joint effort.

Finally, let me point out a problem which I think comes to the heart of the problem of special education. Exceptional children are exceptional, and therefore, they need very special care and protection. But they are more <u>children</u> than <u>exceptional</u>. If, out of symphathy with these children, we should give them so much care and protection as to keep them entirely separated from the rest of children, then the remedy would be worse than the evil. What we need is the integration of handicapped children with ordinary children. Of course, it is easier said than done, and it is this very problem whose importance we have so far tended to overlook and whose solution we are now seeking desparately. The solution

cannot be found in the special education alone. Effort on the part of handicapped children alone would not achieve integration. We need genuine understanding and sincere response on the part of ordinary shcools, healthy children and their parents, and of the community at large. Very recently, we have revised course of study both for special schools and ordinary schools particularly with this point in mind. But, needless to say, revision of the course of study is but a small step. The goal is thousands of miles away. However, I hope that this is a meaningful step, no matter how small.

Mr. Chairman, this describes very briefly the current status and problems of special education in Japan. I have brought with me a film depicting the process of education of double handicapped children (native deaf and blind). At present, 161 children of deaf and blind double handicapped are enrolled in special schools. Multiply handicapped children of various kinds account for about 26 percent of the total enrollment in special schools. The narration in the film is English, and I hope that it is self-explanatory. So, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, this concludes my presentation, and thank you very much for your kind attention.